A Plain

SERMON

Preached to a

Country Congregation

In the beginning of the late

REBELLION

IN THE

WEST.

Publiſhed for the Inſtruction of Country People in their Duty to the King, and the Refutation of ſome ſlanderous Reports raiſed upon the Preacher.

By *Vin. Owen.*

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AN ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER.

THis plain Sermon Preached to a Countrey Congregation, without any deſign of making it publick, was drawn from me by the Clamors of ſome People againſt it, and the Aſperſions they caſt upon me for it. The Occaſion of Preaching it was this; when I firſt heard the news of the late Rebels in the Weſt, I thought it my Duty to put my Pariſhioners in mind of their Duty to the King, and to endeavour to confirm them in their Loyalty againſt all ſuch Temptations as they might (probably) meet with from evil minded men. To that end, I preached the greateſt part of what is here Printed the next Lords day, hoping that it might do good, and being Confident that it would not give the leaſt offence, becauſe I had more then once upon ſome Occaſion or other, either in Preaching or Catechiſing, delivered the ſame things for ſubſtance, and offended no body by it. But within two days after, I was told,

told that ſome of my Pariſhoners had ſaid. I had made a bad Sermon the Sunday before, a Sermon that had little of the Goſpel in it; but why they thought ſo or what they faulted, or who thoſe wiſe men were, I could not learn from him that told it me: And the next day there was a Report brought to my Houſe, from a Village ſeven miles diſtant, That I had Preached the beſt and greateſt part of my Pariſhoners out of the Church. This great lye I could not but wonder at, and being told that it was one of my own Pariſh that brought it thither, and had (probably) carried it further, it was ſome trouble to me. And upon ſecond thought I reſolved to Preach the ſame Sermon again (as near as I could in the very ſame words) the next Lords day, preſuming that ſome of the more ignorant ſort of People had miſunderſtood my words, or that there was great need of inculating the ſame things to prevent (if it were poſſible) the riſing of any Seditious or Rebellious thoughts in any of them, or to ſuppreſs them, if they were already riſin, which ſome Storys that were ſcattered abrord the Countrey, and were but to eaſily believed by the common ſort, did make me afraid of. Accordingly I did ſo, adding in the cloſe ſome few things upon the ſame Subject. But before that work was ended, I was informd that I was become the talk of the County, and inquiring upon what account, I heard it was for preaching Popery; and it was ſaid by many, that I was turning Papiſt, if not turned; and it was added that I had great Correſpondence with a Gentleman of the Popiſh Religion in my Pariſh, ſent him News and received News from him dayly (though I had not ſeen nor heard from him in ſeveral Months, and he was at that time (as I was informed) in Warwickſhire) and it was ſaid in a Popiſh houſe not three-miles

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from me, That I had Preach'd that the Pope was Supream Head of the Church. How I reſented theſe ſlanderous Storys, the Reader may eaſily gueſs. That in a Pariſh where I had lived ſeveral years, and taken no little pains, Preaching and Catechiſing Conſtantly every Lords day, and ſometimes on other days; when I had wronged none but obliged all ſo far as in me lay; where I had not been exact in requiring my dues, nor vexed any with Law Suits, how obnoctious ſoever they were to them; where I had ſpent almoſt all I had received in Hoſpitality and Charity; where I had forgiven many wrongs, and ſometimes ſo paſt them by, as not once to mention them to thoſe that did them, leaving them wholly to the Reproofs of their on Conſciences; and it ſhort where I deſerved not the leaſt ill will (as many will bear me witneſs) for which I muſt for ever glory to God, and I ſpeak it not out of a humor of boaſting, but as conſtrained to it, to convince my ſlanderers of the greatneſs of their ſin; That in ſuch a Pariſh (I ſay) I ſhould find any ſo blockiſhly ignorant in matters of Religion, ſo heedleſs and inconſiderate as to call that Popery which was downright againſt it; or ſo ill affected towards me as to raiſe and ſpread abroad ſuch ſlanderous Reports againſt me, at ſuch a time, and when they could not but know, that if the Rebels had been able to have brought their forces amongſt us, the Reports would have expoſed me to their Fury, and in all probability have coſt me my life, if they could have gotten me into their Hands; or that they ſhould be ſo ill affected towards the King (when I am ſure they had been taught better) as for his ſake to Perſecute me thus with their Tongues, all this I belive the Readerr will think was no light Affliction to me. And yet this was not all, for as I had reaſon to believe that I had loſt all my

labour

labour of Love *with many of them, and ſaw them in the ready way to loſe their own Souls; ſo by what I heard from ſome of my Reverend Brethren concerning the Carriage of the people towards them, I ſaw plainly that the Enemies of our Religion would draw no ſmall Advantage from thier Humor and Doings, and that they were taking a direct Courſe to deprive themſelves of that Religion they ſeem ſo fond of. But how ſadly ſoever I reſented all this, and more then this, I reſolved to keep my Reſentments to my ſelf, and never to declare them to any; and had done ſo, I beileve, if it had not come into my thoughts, that my ſeeming unconcernedneſs might be interpreted to my prejudice, and made an Argument againſt me that I was indeed very much inclined towards Popery. Having therefore changed my Reſolution, and begun to unboſom my ſelf to ſome of my Friends, they told me that the beſt, if not the only way (the Report being carried ſo far) to wipe of thoſe Aſperſions, and to make the ſlanderers aſhamed, was to Print my Sermon. This Advice (though not approved at firſt) I reſolved at length to follow, upon theſe Conſiderations; That I was concerned to wipe them of, if I deſired to do any good in the Countrey, the name of a Papiſt being no leſs hated by the generality then that of the Devil, and becoming every day more odious to them by the Storys that go about (with how much truth I know not) of the threatning Speeches and inſolent Actions of ſome of them. That the Sermon, plain as it is, contains wholſom Inſtructions, and may do ſome good, with God's bleſſing, both among* Proteſtants *and* Papiſts; *for that ſome of both ſorts will read it, who have read nothing elſe upon this Subject, I am very Confident. That ſome who are too apt to ſlander the Clergy may be reſtrained in ſome meaſure from it by what is*

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To the Reader.

here accounted for, and others may become leſs forward to entertain any ill ſtoryes that are raiſed concerning them. Theſe and ſome other Reaſons induced me to publiſh it, and to put my Name to it, though I had formerly reſolved that my Name ſhould never be put to any book. I have only one thing more to ſay as to this matter, viz. *That I have Printed nothing but what I Preached, from the beginning to the end of the third particular concerning the Perſons commanded to be ſubject; and have left out nothing material, only ſome words here and there which I uſed in ſpeaking to explain my meaning, and make it more eaſy to be underſtood by ignorant people; and that the cloſe is a little of another* Sermon *Preached afterwards upon the latter part of the verſe, for I continued to preach upon the ſame Subject, till the news came that the Rebels were vanquiſhed,*

And now if this fall into the Hands of any of my Reverend Brethren of the Clergy, I would deſire them to conſider with me how much we are concern'd to take heed to our ſelves, and to our Doctrine, *in theſe Times; to Arme our ſelves with Courage againſt all the ill Uſage we are like to meet with, both from thoſe who are yet our own people, and from thoſe that are not; to unite all together in Love, to defend againſt all adverſaryes our Common Intereſt, I mean not our ſmall Revenues, Reputations and the like, though theſe are not to be ſlighted, but I mean our moſt* Holy Religion, *and the Laws of that beſt of Churches to which we do belong, to implore Gods mercy dayly towards our People, and beg Pardon from him for their Abuſe of the Goſpel, and their vile treating of us its unworthy Miniſters: And earneſtly to beſeech him to kindle and maintain in our hearts ſuch a fervent*

a fervent Love to their Souls, which Christ has redeemed with his most precious blood, that no discouragement we may receive from any may be of force to render us careless of them, and make us cease to labour with all our might for their everlasting Salvation. Amen.

From *Mounstow*
the 20th. of *July*
1685.

A Plain SERMON

Preached to a

Country Congregation

In the beginning of the late

REBELLION IN THE WEST, &c.

Rom. 13. verſ. 1. *Let every Soul be Subject unto the Higher Powers.*

THat you may underſtand theſe Words, and your own Duty, I muſt deſire you to Conſider with me three things, *viz.*

1. What is here meant by the *Higher Powers.*
2. What it is *to be Subject* unto them.
3. What is meant by *every Soul.*

1. What is here meant by the *Higher Powers.* And for the better underſtanding of this, and that I may take occaſion to ſuggeſt ſome things to you, which are but too needful to be ſuggeſted in theſe

days, I must desire you to note the following Particulars.

1. By the *Higher Powers* we must understand *Human Earthly Powers*. Such as are *ordained of God* for the Government of the World, and under God, take care of the Publick weal, being his Ministers, to encourage and reward those that do good, and to punish those that do evil; to whom *Tribute* is therefore to be paid, as a just Acknowledgment of their Care and Pains for the Common good.

This is so plain from the words of the Text, and those that follow them, that I need not insist upon it. But this I have noted, to discover to you the folly and wickedness of those, that oppose *Government* or *Magistracy*, as contrary to the Gospel, and as an Usurpation upon Christian Liberty. That there were such People in the very first Times of Christianity, is evident from what the Apostle St. *Peter* in his second Epistle, *Chap.* 2. *vers.* 10. and the Apostle St. *Jude* vers. 8. of his Epistle, do tell us. Where we read of *Filthy Dreamers, that defiled the Flesh, living in the Lust of uncleaness, and despised Dominion* [or Government] *and speak evil of Dignitys*: pretending (as we may probaly gather from other places of Holy Scripture) that the Gospel freed them from all obligation to Magistrates, as such, and that they were not bound to be subject to them. That these men were of the *Jews*, and of the *Sect* of the *Pharisees*, before their taking upon them the Profession of Christianity, I cannot affirm; but it is probable that they were, for 'tis certain that the *Pharisees* were a proud and ungovernable sort of People, so Pure and Holy, and so dear to God in in their own conceit, that they thought it unfit-

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ing for them to be Subject, or to pay Tribute to the *Roman* Emperors; And therefore as they did ſeveral times Rebel, for they did always watch for opportunities to caſt off the *Roman* Yoke. And it is certain, that as the *Phariſees* looked upon themſelves to be Gods peculiar People, and as ſuch were not to acknowledge any Power over them, but that of God, as only King and Ruler of his People; ſo theſe filthy *Heretics* pretending themſelves to be the choſen People of God, would own no King or Ruler over them, but Chriſt, and as they were his Servants and Subjects, they were a free People as to all other *Powers*; But however this may be, the Apoſtles of our Lord eſteemed their Doctrine ſo deſtructive to the peace and welfare of human Society, and ſo ſcandalous to the Chriſtian Profeſſion, that they thought they could not too often caution Chriſtians againſt it, or beſtow too black a Character upon them that taught it. And yet notwithſtanding all the cautions they have given us in their Epiſtles, and the many hard things they have written of them, we know that there have been many ſuch People of late years in this Kingdom, that will acknowledg no King over them but Chriſt, and own no Government but what they call his, would be all Powers themſelves, and next to Chriſt, at his *Right hand* or *Left hand*. They account themſelves ſo perfect, that they eſteem all *Human Powers* as needleſs, though all men ſee, that they have not the leaſt ſpark of that Perfection they do boaſt of, and have as much need of Government, as the *Horſe and Mule of a Bit and Bridle*. They cry up Chriſtian Liberty, and would make the World believe that Subjection to *Human Powers* is contrary to it:

but the Liberty they cry up is nothing else but a *Cloak* for their *Naughtiness* (or maliciousness) and a pretence for them *to do what is good in their own Eyes*; and you need not be remembered, that when there *was no King in Israel*, and every man did so, there was nothing but Outrage and Violence and Confusion both among them and us. In short, the Liberty they talk of is so far from being Christian Liberty, that it is Antichristian Lawlessness, Rudeness, and Licentiousness; for Christ hath taught us Subjection to the *Higher Powers*, and hath assured us by his Apostle here, *that there is no Power but of God, and the Powers that be, are ordained of God.* And therefore if we be truly Christs Servants, we shall be as truly the Kings Subjects, and faithfully perform the Dutys of such, because Christ hath so commanded us.

2. By the *Higher Powers* you are not to understand any thing distinct from the Persons in Power, but the Persons in Power themselves. This is evident from the Context; for the *Higher Powers* in the Text are no other then the *Rulers* in the 3*d. vers.* which *Rulers* are called in the same verse the *Power.* Besides Power and Authority abstracted from the Persons in whom it is, cannot be said to do what the *Power* or *Powers*, are said to do, *viz.* to commend, or encourage, aveng or punish. Add to this, that the Apostle having mentioned the *Power*, *vers.* the 3. and the *Praise* which they that do well have from it, he adds immediately, *vers.* the 4*th. For he* (that must needs be the Person in Power) *is the Minister of God to thee for good, and he bears not the Sword in vain*, &c. Nor can we think this use of the word strange, because 'tis thus used more than once in the

the Holy Scriptures, (See *Luke* 12. *verſ.* 11. and *Chapter* 8. of this Epiſtle, *verſe* 38. when the *Principalitys* and *Powers* mentioned, are certainly the the Princes and Men in Power, which ſhould perſecute Chriſts Diſciples for their Faith) and becauſe 'tis thus uſed frequently in Human Authors, as might eaſily be ſhewed you, if I did think it neceſſary. And indeed Common Reaſon will teach us thus to interpret it; for Power ſeparated from the Perſon in whom it is, is but a *Chimera* or figment of the Brain, and ſerves to no purpoſe at all in the lives of men. In Notion (as we ſay) they are diſtinct, and may be conſidered aſſunder; but indeed they are one and the ſame and cannot poſſibly be divided. And therefore they that reſiſt the Perſons of them that are in Power, reſiſt their Power and Authority too. The King of *Syria* that commanded his Captains, to fight neither with ſmall nor great, but againſt *Ahab* did bid them fight *againſt the King of Iſrael*. And *Achitophels* Counſel was not only againſt *David*, but againſt the King alſo. And when *David* cut off the ſkirts of *Saul's* Garment, his *heart* told him that he had injured the King, the *Anointed of the Lord*. To ſay that *Ahab*, *Saul* or *David* could be touched, wounded, ſlain, and their Power or Authority not violated, is to ſpeak ſuperfine, nice, (and to uſe the common phraſe of of ſome men) *unſcriptural* Nonſcence; to mince and diſtinguiſh things into juſt nothing; the Power and the Perſon in whom 'tis Seated being inſeparable. And this I have noted for the Condemnation of thoſe who were the Authors of that Diſtinction betwixt Power and Perſon, as if one might fight againſt the one, and not againſt the other;

1 King. *ult.* *v.* 31.
2 Sam. 17. 1, 2.
1 Sam. 24. 4.

And

And much more of those who could not only distinguish betwixt the Power and the Person, but could Arm the Authority or Power against the Person that bare it. For so in the late damnable Rebellion; the *Commons* that raised it, did pretend the Kings Authority to take Arms against Himself; and though they took his Person Prisoner, and cut off his Head, yet they pretended that they did not design to hurt the King. A most Hellish Device, and beyond any of old *Achitophels*, framed on purpose to overturn all setled Goverments, and to bring Confusion and destruction upon all Human Society. Against which our Laws have since very well provided, requiring all persons admitted to Offices and Places of trust to abjure, or renounce upon Oath, the *Trayterous position of taking Arms by the Kings Authority against his Person*. Indeed 'tis hard to imagine that any rational People should ever entertain such a *Trayterous Position*; the Authority which is for the safety of Subjects being manifestly much more for the safety of the Sovereign. But what the Devil can do in the world (by Gods permission) and what power he has over men, even wise men in wordly matters, that love not the Truth in sincerity, but hold it in unrighteousness is plain, as in other things, so in the prevalence of this senceless Doctrine in the late Times, and by the backwardness of many to renounce it even in ours.

3. When the Apostle saith, that *every Soul must be subject to the Higher Powers*, we must not understand it, as if he meant, that we must be subject to all the *Powers* that are in any part of the world, and may take upon them to command us; for what

what have we to do with the *Powers* of *France*, or *Spain*, or any other Countrey, and what have they to do with us: but we muſt underſtand it of our own *Higher Powers*, *i. e.* of thoſe whom God hath ſet over us, and are his *Miniſters to us for our good.* Other *Powers* have their people and ſubjects, and they, and their Bounds are known. They are concerned only to command their own Subjects. and their Subjects are concerned to obey them only: And let them ſee to the Practiſe of their Duty: They have nothing to do with us, nor we with them, but as we have *Powers* or Governors of our own, ſo we muſt be ſubject to them, and them only. If therefore any Foreign Prince or Potentate ſhall take upon him to command us, we may, we muſt, ſlight his commands, and reſiſt his Forces, if he uſes any to compel us, that we may diſcharge or Duty to our own King and Governor. God has not commanded us to *Serve* ſeveral *Maſters* of different intereſt and deſigns, nay he has forbidden it, in that he has ſet *One* over us, and commanded us to be ſubject unto him. And this is the more to be remembred by us, becauſe of the Popes claim, what Power and Authority not only over us, but over thoſe Powers alſo, which are ſet over us, by Almighty God. Believe the Pope, and you muſt believe that we are his ſubjects, and that the King is ſo likewiſe, that he can depoſe him and give his Crown and Kingdom to another, if he ſees cauſe, that he can looſe the Bond of our Allegiance, and empower us to fight againſt him, and caſt him out of his Throne. This Power the Popes of *Rome* have claimed, but as we are ſure Chriſt never gave it them, ſo we cannot own any ſuch Power in them but we muſt be

be guilty of the breach of our Duty towards the King. And againſt the owning of any ſuch Power, the *Oath* of *Supremacy* is a neceſſary and wiſe Caution.

4. By the *Higher Powers* we muſt underſtand not only the Higheſt *Power* in the Kingdom, *i. e.* the King, but the *Powers*, alſo that are ſubordinate to him, and commiſſionated by him. 'Tis not ſaid the *Higheſt Power*, or *Higher Power*, but the *Higher Powers*, 'Tis not to one only, but to many that we muſt be ſubject, but to thoſe many, not as *Coordinate*, for ſuch our Kingdom hath not, but as *ſubordinate*, as deriving Authority from one, *i. e.* the King, who is the *Supreme*, or the *Higheſt Power*, in the Kingdom. And thus St. *Peter* may expound St. *Pauls* meaning, 1 *Pet.* 2. 13. where both theſe are expreſt, and we are told, that we muſt *Submit* to the *King* as *Supreme* in his Kingdom, and to *Governors*, as *appointed by him.* Which, as *Beza* notes, is added to prevent the cavil of thoſe who pretend obedience to the *Supreme* Magiſtrates, but deſpiſe his Officers, and Miniſters. And indeed Subjection to the Supream Magiſtrate carries this in it; Authority being derived from him, as the Head to them, as his Hands and Inſtruments. Do men expect that the King ſhould come to every one of them, and deliver his will and pleaſure to them in his own perſon? do they think that he Himſelf can do every thing that is to be done for the welfare of his Kingdom? Surely not. He muſt make uſe of others in moſt things, and do great part of his work by them; and as he muſt do this; ſo what we do to them is done as to himſelf; if we be ſubject to them acting by Authority from him, we are ſub-

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ject to him; if we reſiſt them we reſiſt him. And this directly oppoſes that *Traiterous* Poſition of ſome in theſe Kingdoms. *That though it be unlawful to take Arms againſt the King, yet it is lawful to take Arms againſt thoſe that are Commiſſionated by him.* But againſt whom do they oppoſe themſelves, when they oppoſe themſelves againſt the Kings Commiſſioners? do they not oppoſe thoſe that Act by his Authority? And can they be reſiſted, and he not be reſiſted, his Autority not violated? This is as much as to ſay, I ſtrike at a mans Legs or Arms, but not at the man; as if the man and his Legs or Arms were not all one, as if thoſe might be wounded, or cut off, and the man not hurt.

5. Though we muſt not underſtand by the Apoſtles words, that it is our duty to be ſubject to the *Higheſt Power* only, yet we muſt underſtand them thus, that it is our Duty to be ſubject in the firſt place to the Higheſt, for here is an *Emphaſis* on the word *Higher*, and the *Higher* is to be looked upon as the *Power*. 'Tis true, the Kings Miniſters are higher then we, and therefore we are to be ſubject to them (as has been ſaid) but the King is higher then they, and they, as we, are to be ſubject to him. The Power they have is the Kings, and they have no power againſt him, and therefore as long as they act under the King and by his Authority, ſo long we are bound to be ſubject to them, but no longer. And by this we may know what we are to do, in caſe it ſhould happen that the inferior Magiſtrates or *Powers* ſhould divide from, and oppoſe themſelves, againſt the King, and require our Aſſiſtance. That we are to look upon the *Higher* as the *Power*, and to be ſubject to him. If, as in old Time, the *Barons* or any of the great Ones of the Kingdom ſhould call

you to joyn with them, as being the *Powers* to whom you ought to be ſubject; you are to conſider who is higher, the Baron, or he that made him ſo. If any Parliament ſhould (as once you know a Parliament did) reſiſt the King, and require your Aſſiſtance againſt him, as having Power, or being the *Powers*; you are to conſider who is the *Higheſt Power*: who called them or made them to be a Parliament? was it not the King by his Authority? who Eſtabliſheth all their Acts, and giveth them the force of Laws? Is it not the King? who is it that can diſſolve them and make them nothing? Is it not the King? He therefore is to be looked upon as the *Higher Power*, to whom we are to be ſubject.

6. When the Apoſtle requires every *Soul to be Subject* to the *Higher Powers*, you muſt underſtand him, of thoſe *Powers* that are lawfully and by true Right ſuch, and not by Uſurpation. An Uſurper can no more be ſaid to be the *Higher Power*, then one that drives thee out of thy houſe can be ſaid to be the true Owner of it. They only can be ſaid to be the *Higher Powers*, whoſe right it is to be ſo. And this, the word which is rendred *Powers* doth import, as every one knows that underſtands the Greek Tongue; and the words of the Apoſtle in the later part of this verſe ſhew us, that we muſt underſtand him thus, the *Powers* that we muſt be ſubject to, being ſuch, as *are of God*, and *ordained of God*, and *the Miniſters of God*: Not every one that can get into the Throne, by any means or Methods, is to be owned for our Sovereign, but He whoſe right it is to be in the Throne. And I need not ſay, that our preſent Sovereign has apparently that Right; becauſe, beſides the Crown's coming to him by a long lawful lineal

lineal Deſcent, His Right thereunto has been publickly owned by the three Eſtates of the Kingdom, Aſſembled in Parliament; every Kingdom ſhould be to their King as *Bucephalus* is ſaid to have been to *Alexander*, he would carry none but his own Maſter; ſo a Kingdom ſhould bear none but its own lawful King and Governor. Every one that attempts the Throne ſhould be repelled, and he that uſurps it ſhould be caſt and thrown. There ſhould be *overturning*, *overturning*, *overturning* until he comes to take poſſeſſion, whoſe *Right it is*, as it was in the late times of Uſurpation and Tyranny. The King therefore, our preſent King, (for whoſe preſervation and protection we do dayly pray) and thoſe that are in Authority under him, are the *Higher Powers* whom the Apoſtle enjoyns us to be ſubject to; But,

7. You muſt note, that the Apoſtle does not ſay, that we muſt be ſubject to the *Higher Powers* if they be ſo and ſo qualified, if they be of this or that Religion; but without any ſuch limitation, *Let every Soul be ſubject to the Higher Powers.* Now when the Law diſtinguiſhes not, it is not for us to do it, where God puts no limitation nor exception we ought not. It is a good note of *Beza's* upon the words, that the Apoſtle did not uſe *a Trope here, putting the word Powers for them that have the Power raſhly and unadviſedly; but that we might know that it is our duty to be ſubject to them that are in Authority and Power, how unworthy ſoever they may ſeem to us to be of that Power and Authority.* And Surely if ever any Perſon was unworthy of Power, *Nero*, who was Roman Emperour when this Epiſtle was written, was unworthy of it, for by the conſent of all Writers, he was a meer Monſter, a moſt filthy and cruel Tyrant;

and yet the Apoſtle charged Chriſtians to be ſubject to him. And this Obſervation I have made, becauſe at this time ſome ignorant people, or worſe then ignorant, ſeem to think, That we are not bound to be ſubject to our preſent King, becauſe (as they ſay, ſpeaking what they know not) he is not of our Religion. But I beſeech you, *Brethren*, to conſider that *Nero* and thoſe that were in Authority under him were ſo far from being of the Chriſtian Religion, that they were bloudy perſecutors of it; and yet it was the Duty of Chriſtians then to be ſubject to them, and they were ſo really and heartily. And is it not our Duty to be ſubject to a Chriſtian Prince, for ſo our King is, to a Prince that is ſo far from perſecuting us for Religion, that he protects and defends both us, and it, and hath ſolemnly promiſed ſo to do; certainly it is. And if we think not ſo, I am ſure, we underſtand not the Religion of Chriſt, and do but ill deſerve that he ſhould protect either us, or that which we call our Religion, you ſee then who are the *Higher Powers*, whom we are to be ſubject to. Let us now

II. Conſider what it is to *be ſubject* to them. *Let every Soul be ſubject* or *let every Soul ſubject himſelf* to the Higher Powers; for ſo the words may be rendred, we ſhould ſubject our ſelves to the Higher Powers, and not be forced to it by them: the more free and ready our ſubjection is, the more acceptable it is to God and them, but letting this paſs at preſent, the words, are not a permiſſion barely as of a thing indifferent, nor Counſel meerly as of a thing expedient; but *Imperative* of a thing that is our Duty. And therefore you may obſerve that the Apoſtle ſays afterwards, *v.* 5. *wherefore* we muſt *needs be ſubject*

ject, there is a neceſſity laid upon us, we are under a Command and an indiſpenſible obligation to be ſo, *not only for wrath, but for Conſcience ſake.* Now the word, which we tranſlate, *to be ſubject*, ſeems to me to be of large ſignification, and to comprehend our whole Duty to the *Higher Powers*, all that we are obliged to, as Inferiors or Subjects in our ſeveral ſtations or places, with reſpect to them, the ſeveral parts or branches whereof we are taught in other Texts of Scripture. I cannot but think it meet to mention briefly ſome of the cheifeſt.

1. There muſt be a ſubjection of the ſoul to them ſo far as to entertain a reverent eſteem of them, and to do our Duty as Subjects readily and faithfully, we muſt Reverence them for the place they are in, and the Authority they are Inveſted with, as having Gods Authority, and his Sword of Juſtice, and Vengance for the *puniſhment of evil doers* and *the praiſe of them that do well*, we are charged by *Solomon* to *fear the Lord and the King*, Prov. 24. 21. Not the Lord only, but the King alſo. Now as the *Fear of the Lord* is nothing elſe but ſuch an awful ſence of his glorious Majeſty and Power, as ſubjects our whole man to his Will and Commandments; ſo the *Fear of the* King is nothing elſe but ſuch an inward Reverent eſteem of his Place, Dignity and Authority, as makes us to ſubject our ſelves unto him in all things that are not contrary to the will of God. Again, the ſame *Solomon* commands us *not to curſe the King, no not in our thoughts*, Eccl. 10.20. *i. e.* to entertain no mean and contemptuous thoughts of him, but to think as honourably of him as is poſſible, as of a Perſon whom Almighty God, whoſe wiſdom is greater than thine or mine, hath thought good to ſet over us, and to ad-

vance

vance next to himself in Power and Dignity. And this inward esteem of the *Higher Powers* is the Soul and Life of that *Honour*, which the fifth Commandment enjoyns us towards them; without which our outward Subjection is but little worth in the sight of God, as proceeding not from Conscience, but from force or fear of Punishment, and will as soon fail as that shall be removed. They are therefore wicked men, who though they yeild outward Subjection to the Higher Powers, do yet in their hearts contemn them. These are not Christs Disciples, but Pope *Hildebrands* (or *Gregory* the Seventh) whose Doctrine it was, that *Kings had their beginning from men, who affected Rule by the instigation of the Devil.*

2. There must be a Subjection of the Tongue to the Higher Powers, *i. e.* we must use our Tongues to their honour, to express and manifest the Reverence of our hearts towards them. When Saint *Paul* was to speak for himself before King *Agrippa* and *Festus*, he gave *Agrippa* frequently the Title of King; and though *Festus* told him that he *was beside himself*, (which was enough to have stirred an ordinary Patience) he gave him a modest, a sober Answer, with the Title of *most noble Festus*, Act. 26. 25. And of the same Saint *Paul* we read, *Act.* 23. 5. that when he had unadvisedly called the High Priest a *Whited-wall*, (being moved by a blow most unjustly given him,) and was reprehended for it, he acknowledged his fault, shewing how we ought to speak to our Rulers by quoting a known Text of Scripture, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ruler of thy People.* Which passage is the more to be remembred, because it shews that it is not unlawful only

only to uſe unjuſt Reproaches, but even to ſpeak reproachfully of the real Failings of our Governors: It being unqueſtionable, that the High Prieſt was no better than a *Whited-wall*, who pretending to judge according to the Law, did contrary to the Law, command an innocent Perſon to be ſmitten. We muſt therefore either not ſpeak at all of the *Higher Powers*, or elſe ſpeak well and honorably of them. We are too bold when we make them the Subjects of our common Diſcourſes, too ſawcy when we preſume to cenſure their Actions, and we take too much upon us, when we pretend to fathom the Depth of their Policys, and to condemn the wiſdom of their proceedings. No Maſter will endure ſuch Behaviour from his Servants, no Parent from his Children: And yet every ordinary Peaſant, every rude and thick-ſculled *Mechanic* will be *Prating* of the Higher Powers, and calling them to their *Bar*, as if they thought themſelves able to teach them, how to govern the Kingdom. In this it is that Rebellion begins, when once men become ſo bold as to ſhoot the *ſharp Arrows* of their Tongues againſt their Governors, they uſually proceed to take Arms into their hands. Theſe *unruly Talkers* do more againſt the *Powers* then the Angels of God dare to do: and if you have any regard to what St. *Peter* and St. *Jude* have written, you muſt place them in the ſame Rank with the *Apoſtate* Spirits, and the *filthy Sodomites*, ſee the 2d. Epiſtle of St. *Peter*. Cap. 2. and read the Epiſtle of St. *Jude*.

3. Every Soul muſt be Obedient to the Higher Powers. *Put them in mind* (ſaith St. *Paul* to *Titus* Cap. 3. v. 1.) to be *Subject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magiſtrates*; we muſt obey all their juſt

just Laws, all their lawful Commands, &c. Whatsoever they require and enjoyn, if we can do it without sinning against God (whose Power is greater than theirs) we must do it. I say we must do it, because when the Laws may be obeyed without sin, our disobedience is a sin, and our suffering the penalty doth not remove the sin, nor free us from the Judgment of God. And this I have said, to shew you the ill use that is commonly made of a Distinction currant among us, of *Active* and *Passive* Obedience, as if men might break the just Laws of the King, and yet be good Subjects, and not break this Commandment of God; because they suffer the penalty, when they cannot avoid it. And so by the help of this Distinction (which is none of the best) those that least respect Authority, would be thought as Dutiful and Obedient Subjects, as they that are most observant of the Laws. But as Almighty God the Supreme Ruler and Governor of the World, when he gave Laws to mankind, did not intend that they should break them and dye; so the *Power* that he hath set over us, have not made Laws that men may be punished for breaking them, but that they may observe them for their own and the publick Good. And unless it be equally good to the King, that his Subjects obey or be punished; unless it be all one to him whether they be benefitted by the Laws, or made miserable, it cannot be thought that the Law is satisfied in its main Intention, when the Subject is punished for the breach of it. It is very true, that when any Law is contrary to any Command of God, Subjects are not bound to *Active* obedience, for *God must be obeyed rather than men*, and then the *Passive* Obedience or Submission

Submiſſion to the Puniſhment is *Sufficient*; but when the Law of the King is not contrary to any Command of God, the chuſing of *Paſſive* Obedience before *Active* is a real Contempt and Scandal.

4. Our Purſes and Eſtates muſt be ſo far ſubject to the *Higher Powers*, as the paying of Taxes, Tributes and Cuſtoms according as the Laws do require. When the Queſtion was propoſed to our bleſſed Saviour by ſome *Jews*, whether it were lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæſar* or not? He anſwered, *Render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſars*, Math. 22. 21. Cuſtoms and Tributes are *Cæſars*, therefore *Cæſar* muſt have them. And the Apoſtle here mentions it as an Inſtance of our ſubjection to the *Higher Powers*. That we pay them Tribute, *verſ. 7. Render to all their Dues, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom.* And due they are to the *Higher Powers*, both in Juſtice and Gratitude, for they are at the coſt of our Defence and Protection, and the Benefits we partake of by their care and pains are innumerable and invaluable. They are *Gods Miniſters attending continually upon this very thing.*

5. We ought to be ſubject in undertaking ſuch Offices as the *Higher Powers* ſhall call us to, and in diſcharging them faithfully for their honour and the publick good. Kings cannot do all things themſelves, in their own Perſons, but muſt make uſe of others in ſeveral employments, and who can they better make uſe of then their own ſubjects, and who are obliged to undertake them but they? To thoſe offices or employments that are mean and

inferior the Dignity of Kings is not to condescend; in those that are dangerous, the safety of their Persons is not to be hazarded. The People of *Israel* would not consent that *David* their King should go out with them to Battle, for fear of *quenching their light*, and they looked upon him as *worth many Thousands of them*. The People are σώματι καὶ χρήμασι τιμωρεῖν, they are to assist their Prince with their bodys and their Purses in the service of War.

6. We must be so subject to all their censures and punishments, as in no case to resist them. If they lay heavy burdens upon us, oppress and wrong us, yea persecute us even to death, we must not tumultuate and rebel against them. *There is no Power* (saith the Apostle here) *but is of God, and the Powers that be are ordained of God.* They have their Authority from God and not from us, and they are over us by Gods appointment, as his Ministers; and though God gave them their Power for their subjects good, yet if they will abuse it, they are responsible to God for it, and not to us, he has Power to punish them, but we have none, and he will do it when, and in what manner, he sees good; and it is better for us to leave him to do it who hath said *Vengeance is mine*, and I *will repay*, then to take upon us to do it our selves; and if we do so, we are sure of a sufficient reward for our patient submission; but if we *resist them*, the Apostle tells us, *we resist the Ordinance of God*, we are Rebellious not only against our King, but against God himself, and therefore our resistance is highly sinful and damnable; for *They that resist shall receive to themselves Damnation*. To which let me add the words

words of St. *Peter* 1 *Epist.* 2. 20. Where resistance is plainly forbidden even to an innocent Person. *For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your Faults, ye shall take it patiently; but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye shall take it patiently, this is acceptable with God, for even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps, who did no sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth; who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatned not, but committed himself [or his cause] to him that judgeth righteously.* This Doctrine the Apostles of our Lord taught, and the example of their Lord and ours they followed, and so did all Christians for above six hundred years after Christ, not only not Rebelling, or Caballing, or Conspiring against the *Higher Powers*, when they were most of all tempted to it, when they were persecuted and oppressed, killed and tormented, spoyled of their goods, and every way most disingenuously used; but also professing it to be unlawful. And therefore if any be not convinced, that this is their Duty; if any do believe, and will take upon them, to maintain that they may lawfully in any case, or for any cause, (suppose it be for Religion) Rebel against, or in any tumultuous and violent ways, resist the Higher Powers, they ought to be looked upon as wretched Apostates from one of the most considerable points of the Christian Doctrine; as the maintainers of one of the most pernicious and damnable Heresies that ever was brought into the world. Now in the practice of these Dutys does our subjection to the *Higher Powers* mainly consist and shew it self; and if we will

will obſerve this precept of the Apoſtle, it behoves us to take care that we be not wanting in any one of them.

III. I proceed now to ſhew you what is meant by *every Soul*, or who are the Perſons who are bound to be ſubject to the *Higher Powers*. Concerning which there is no doubt but by *every Soul*, the Apoſtle means every man by an uſual *Synecdoche*. It is poſſible indeed that the Apoſtle did make choice to ſpeak thus, putting the *Soul* for the man, to intimate that our ſubjection to the *Higher Powers*, ſhould be from the Heart and Soul, free, ready, cheerful; not by conſtraint which is bruitiſh; not meerly Paſſive, but in all lawful things Active, but it matters not whether he did ſo or not, for it is evident enough from other places of Scripture, that it ought to be ſo; that which the Apoſtle teaches concerning the ſubjection or obedience of Servants to their Maſters, *Eph.* 6. 6. 7. and *Coloſ.* 3. 23. being applicable with advantage to the ſubjection of all Inferiors to the Higher Powers. That which I think my ſelf concerned to note is, That all Perſons without exception of any, ought to be ſubject to the *Higher Powers*. Let *every Soul* (ſaith the Apoſtle) an expreſſion that includes all and excludes none. And thus any unprejudiced man of common ſences one would think muſt underſtand it, for beſides the force of the expreſſion it ſelf, *every Soul*, the Apoſtles words afterwards, *whoſoever reſiſteth the Power —— and they that reſiſt ——and wilt thou not be afraid of the Power ——— And he is the Miniſter of God to thee*, &c. ſeem to be uſed on purpoſe to direct every one that is not a

Higher

Higher Power, or *Ruler*, to take the precept as given to himſelf. And yet notwithſtanding this the Popes of *Rome* and their Adherents for ſeveral hundredsof years have made bold ſo to diſtinguiſh and limit the Apoſtles words, as to exempt themſelves, and all their Clergy, from ſubjection to the *Civil Powers*. But what Warrant they have from God to do thus I am altogether ignorant. We know that our Bleſſed Saviour owned the Power of the *Roman* Emperor, and thoſe that were in Authority under him, and ſubmitted himſelf to it without pleading any exemption. For thus he anſwered *Pilate* when he ſpake to him of his Power, *Thou couldeſt have no Power at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above* Joh. 19. 11. And we are ſure, that when the Apoſtles were brought before Principalities and *Powers* for their faith ſake, they never excepted againſt their Power, but defended themſelves and their Doctrine before them; yea St. *Paul* did plainly own their Authority, and it is written for our Inſtruction in this point Act. 25. 10, 11. I *ſtand* (ſaith he) at *Cæſars Judgment Seat, where I ought to be judged*, [mark that] *If I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuſe not to dye, I appeal unto Cæſar*. Which *Appealing* unto *Cæſar* was a plain owning of his Authority over him. For the Liberty of Appealing to the *Roman* Emperor was a priviledge granted only to them that were free Citizens of *Rome*, and the Apoſtle could not claim this but by owning himſelf a Citizen of *Rome*, and therefore a ſubject to the cheif Governor thereof. It is no leſs certain that the Holy Fathers and Biſhops of the Church, yea and of *Rome* too, for

above

above six hundreds years after Christ, did not only acknowledge themselves subject to the Civil *Powers*, but did declare that they, and all men whatsoever, were bound to be so. St. *Chrysostom* upon the Text says, that not only *Seculars* but *Priests and Monks are to be subject*, and *although thou beest an Apostle, or an Evangelist, or a Prophet; for this obedience to be sure will not destroy thy piety.* And if we may believe a Bishop of the Roman Church of late years, as we reasonably may, other ancient Fathers as *Euthymius*, *Theodoret*, *Theophylact*, &c. and all the Greek Doctors do agree with him. And *Gregory*, surnamed the Great, Bishop of *Rome*, doth so expound the Text. And Saint *Bernard* (many years afterwards,) in his Epistle to a Bishop said thus. *Every Soul* (saith the Apostle) *then must you also* (speaking to the Bishop of *Senona*) *be subject; who hath exempted you? He that doth offer to exempt you, doth but offer to deceive you.* And therefore let not the Church of *Rome* boast of her sincere delivering to men the truly Ancient, Catholick, and Apostolick Doctrine: Let no *Papist* boast of their Loyal Principles or Practises, or charge any Protestants with Seditious and Traiterous Doctrines; with disloyal, Treasonable, and Rebellious Practises, as confidently as if they themselves were innocent; for besides what has now been discoursed, I doubt not to say, and do say it upon the Faith of a Christian, That I know no Seditious or Rebellious Principle, no Doctrines distructive to Government entertained and asserted by any called Protestants, but the same have been asserted and taught by some Bishops of *Rome* and their Adherents.

rents. But thanks be to God that the Church of *England* can be charged with no ſuch miſchievous and damnable Doctrines; whoſe Doctrine I am ſure I have now taught you, and as I do ſtedfaſtly believe it to be the Doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, ſo I doubt not, but by Gods Grace, I ſhall continue in the belief of it to the end of my Life. Thus have I explained the words of my Text, and I hope clearly and profitably with reſpect to the unhappy circumſtances that this Kingdom is at preſent under.

And now to conclude this Diſcourſe in as few words as may be. Not to trouble you with Complaints of the little Sence which many men have of their Duty to the Higher Powers, which every wiſe and good man cannot but obſerve, and be ſadly and ſorrowfully affected with: Let me in ſhort propoſe ſome few Queſtions to you, and if it be poſſible, to oblige you thereby ſeriouſly to conſider what it is, that ſo indiſpoſes ſome (to uſe no harder a term) to honour, obey and ſerve our preſent Lord the King, that they can hardly endure to be told, that they ought to do ſo. Have any among you ſo little Knowledge of the Goſpel, after ſo many years enjoyment of it, as to think what has now been delivered to be no part of the Goſpel, which Chriſts Miniſters ought to Preach? Are you ſo little able to diſtinguiſh between true Chriſtian (*Proteſtant*) Doctrine and *Popery*, as to call the Preaching of Subjection to the Higher Powers Popery? have you had the Holy Scriptures ſo many years in your Hands, in your own Language, and pretended to make them, and them, only the

Rule

Rule of your Faith and Practiſe? and can you be ignorant of, or will you reject the truths now delivered out of them, and writted ſo plainly in them, that none but thoſe who will ſhut their eyes can avoid ſeeing them? Hath St. *Paul* ſo little credit with us, when he tells us, *That there is no Power but of God, and the Powers that be are ordained of God*, that we will not believe him? or can we poſſibly faſten any other ſence upon his words but this, that it is God that makes Kings, and not men; That whatever they are as to their Perſonal Qualifications, Abilitys for Government, or Religion, they have their Authority from God, and are his Miniſters? And if this be his meaning, have we not good reaſon to believe, that if we diſpiſe them, we deſpiſe God; if we reproach and ſpeak evil of them, we reproach and blaſpheme God; if we diſobey their juſt Laws, we diſobey God; if we murmur, reſiſt, rebel againſt the King, we murmur and rebel againſt God. And can we think, that they can eſcape the Judgment of God, who do ſo? Can we have ſuch thoughts of God, as to imagine, that he is not concerned in a ſpecial manner for the ſafety, the Rights and Intereſts of his own Vicegerents; and the Defence and Maintenance of his own Authority in them for the Government of the world? Are we yet to learn what the miſerable Ends of Seditious, trayterous and Rebellious Perſons uſually are? Has Liberty, Peace and Plenty made us ſo wanton (for I am ſure we yet have ſuffered no Oppreſſion to make us mad, nor any want but what our own Prodigality, idleneſs and viciouſneſs have brought upon us) that we care not what we do to bring confuſion

confuſion upon us? Are we ſuch Sots and Fools as to liſten to the curſed whiſperings of every *Achitophel*, and to dance after the Pipe of every *Sheba*, that ſhall be ſo mad as to blow a Trumpet in Iſrael, and ſay, *we have no part in David, nor Inheritance in the Son of Jeſſe*? Can we propoſe any thing ſo good to our ſelves by overturning the Preſent Goverment, as to reſolve to endure all the miſeries of War, and to march through a Sea of Blood for the compaſſing of it? Are not all our Intereſts more ſafe and ſecure in the boſom of the Divine Providence whilſt we continne quiet in our ſeveral Places, and *ſtudy to do our own Buſineſs*, then they would be under the Shields and Bucklers of the moſt famous Warriors, in the ways of Treaſon and Rebellion? Is the Author and Protector of our moſt holy Religion become ſo careleſs of it, or ſo weak and feeble, that we muſt needs fly to the Devil to ſupport it? ſhall we turn the Religion of the *Croſs* in to a Religion of the *Sword*, and change our *Bibles* for the *Alchoran*? Were all the holy men of old, who could not fight for their Religion, even when they might have overcome (ſo great were their numbers and their Reſolution) but could dye for it, ſuch fools, that we think it madneſs to follow their Example? Have we been reproaching the Church of *Rome*, for ſo many years, (and that juſtly) with their Trayterous and Rebellious Principles and Practiſes, and ſhall we now *lick* up their *Vomit*, and juſtify all their Treaſons and Rebellions by treading in their ſteps? Is it the way to render our Profeſſion lovely in the eyes of the world, and to endear to it our Governors, to do thus? And can we hope to

to engage Almighty God to take care of its preſervation by the worſt practiſes we dare be Guilty of againſt his Vicegerent? In one word, can we take it to be the way to Heaven, to break the Order of the Divine Providence in the Government of the World; to ſet at naught ſo many plain and expreſs Commands from Chriſt, and diſpiſing all the Bleſſings of Peace to endeavour all the ways we can after confuſion and deſtruction: we cannot ſurely be ſo unreaſonable.

Let us therefore, I beſeech you, ſhew our ſelves Men and Chriſtians, Chriſtians of the Communion of the beſt Church in the World, a Church *built upon a Rock*, that can never fall, if we do not overthrow it our ſelves, by our abuſe of the Goſpel, and all thoſe Excellent means of Piety and Vertue which we partake of in it. Let us *fear the Lord, and the King, and not meddle with them that are given to change*; And being ſtedfaſtly perſwaded, that Almighty God is King over all, that *He ſtandeth in the Congregation of the Mighty, and is Judg among the Gods*; that he will not only execute Judgment in another world, but doth Govern this, and conſequently will either Protect us from Violence and Perſecution, or crown our Patience and avenge our Cauſe; let us always ſhew our ſelves good Chriſtians by being Loyal Subjects: And to the conſtant Practiſe of all that hath been now taught, let us add our dayly Prayers to God in the behalf of our preſent *Sovereign, That it may pleaſe God ſo to bleſs and preſerve him, that he may rule over us many years in the Fear of God, the conſtant exerciſe of Piety, Juſtice and Mercy, and in Proſperity and Peace: That he may continue to de-*

ſerve

ſerve the Hearts of all his Subjects, and ever have them: That he may never give them any juſt cauſe for Jealouſys and Suſpicions, and they never entertain any without Cauſe: That he may be happy by our conſtant Practiſe of true Chriſtian Loyalty, and we be ſo likewiſe by his conſtant and effectual Care to maintain and promote the true Profeſſion and Practiſe of Religion, and the welfare of the Church of God. Amen.

FINIS.